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# Advocate of Peace.

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## A Day of Prayer for Cessation of the War.

The day set apart by the President of the United States for prayer for peace in Europe has been in certain respects most remarkable. In every quarter of the land the religious communities earnestly supported the President's appeal. When the fourth of October came the churches, almost without exception, in the great cities and the small, united in devout supplication to the Almighty Ruler of the world to grant to the warring nations such change of disposition toward each other as would speedily put an end to the slaughter and devastation which

has been taking place in Europe. Tens of thousands of preachers, inspired by the momentous occasion, set forth with unwonted zeal and eloquence the basic truth of love, goodwill, and universal brotherhood which ought to cement all the peoples and nations into fellowship and solidarity. A great nation of one hundred millions of men and women, united in prayer to God, not for themselves primarily, but for the governments and peoples of Europe, torn and bleeding in the storm of war, was a spectacle unparalleled in the annals of history. Some people scoffed at the idea, still more were indifferent about the subject, but there was the great people, led by its Chief Executive, in a service as supreme as can ever be performed by one nation for another.

What the effect of the day may be, directly, in arresting the war it is useless to try to foretell. The Eternal God reveals but little to us at the moment. But it is safe to say that the work of that day by this great nation was one of the most tremendous moves ever made toward the ending of the present colossal crime of Europe and the final abolition of war itself.

It will, of course, require hereafter the continuation of genuine prayer and faith if the object aimed at is really to be accomplished. But that is just what one of the chief results of the day will be. The pacifists have had far too little to do directly with God and prayer, to say nothing of many ordinary folk. But if the day of prayer, which was proposed by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America and by several other organizations, representing altogether many millions of the American people, shall not lose its immense significance, and shall result in a permanent spirit of sympathy and interest on the part of our people toward the great peoples of Europe, indeed toward all people of the earth, the question of the abolition of war will soon be solved and the unity and peace of the world accomplished. The nations of the world have been largely accustomed to treat God as if their citizens alone were His children. God is implored to grant victory to the armies of one belligerent nation, and at the same time is also being implored by every other belligerent nation to grant victory likewise to theirs. What is needed is that all the European nations shall nestle close up to the heart of God as

the Father and Friend of them all alike. This is the supreme practical lesson of the Day of Prayer for the cessation of war in Europe.

The widespread comment in the European papers over the President's proclamation of a day of prayer for peace among the warring nations induced the Secretary of State to send the following message to the American ambassadors in the capitals of those countries, expressing the general and sincere response of the people of this country to the President's appeal:

"In obedience to the proclamation of the President, the people of the United States assembled at their places of worship October 4 and joined in prayer for the restoration of peace in Europe. The attendance was very large, and there was everywhere a spirit of earnestness. Care was taken that nothing should be said of a non-neutral nature, the trend of the speeches being that God might so direct those in authority in the belligerent nations as to hasten the restoration of peace, and that the American people might be wisely guided in the exercise of such influence as they might be able to exert."

### "Adequate Armaments."

One of the most persistent curses of humanity is the pernicious activity of plausible phrases which, like "charity," cover a multitude of sins. "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel" was the bitter conclusion of a sage disgusted by the vices which masquerade under that venerated name. Even the sacred name of "religion" has been so abused as to cause the greatest of poets to ask:

"In religion,  
What damnd error, but some sober brow  
Will bless it and approve it with a text?"

And now the world is given the spectacle of the most frightful war in history, waged in the name of "self-defense" and the "preservation of culture," while thousands upon thousands of men, made in God's own image, are being dismissed to the grave as mere "food for powder," the most revered of artistic monuments erected by toiling generations to the glory of God are sacrificed in a single insane hour to the Moloch of "military necessity," and the most solemn of leagues and covenants are torn into shreds as mere "scraps of paper."

The men who have made Germany mad, like Von Treitschke and Bernhardi, have aroused the *furor teutonicus* by urging the plausible argument of "adequate armaments." The Fatherland is in danger, has been their strident cry; the Russian Bear in the East, the new Slavic peril in the South, the old Gallic menace in the West, the British Lion of the North Sea, the Yellow peril of the Orient, the Brown men of India, and the

Black Men of Africa must be guarded against by "adequate armaments." We must have a navy to compete with Britain's; our standing army of a half million is not "adequate"; we must increase it to 850,000, and make every male potentiality for fighting liable to conscription between the ages of fifteen and fifty-five. Our "war chests" must be filled to overflowing with good red gold, and every manufacturing, agricultural, transportation, and financial facility of our land must be made tributary, together with good red blood, the best of human bone and sinew and intellect, to "adequate armaments."

Some of us, like the Bernhardis, declare that this struggle is in itself the noblest of human endeavors, and that "adequate armaments" are the noblest of human achievements. The rest of us avow that preparation for war on this titanic scale is amply justified as the surest way of maintaining the peace with our strangely suspicious neighbors. Our neighbors catch this feverish love for maintaining the peace, and Britain multiplies her navy by three, Russia doubles her army, and so on *ad nauseandum*, but in the inverse ratio to insuring the maintenance or even the hope of peace.

The baleful poison of this philosophy of folly and fear is carried across the oceans and injected into the blood of our own people. Side by side with its efforts to organize genuine peace there is in our country a desperate and determined struggle to maintain "armed peace" by means of "adequate armaments," and the lessons of the present war are being distorted into an argument in advocacy of the big, and bigger, and biggest stick.

How "big" must our stick be? How large are "adequate" armaments? To this question from the man in the street, who has to foot the bill, the bellumist replies: What an absurd and unpatriotic question! We do not know, of course, and cannot know precisely what we are trying to "equal" in our frantic pursuit of "adequacy," for the sufficiency of numbers and the efficiency of fighters is as uncertain and incalculable as the shifting sands of the sea. How can we ever know definitely what are "adequate armaments," when projectiles irresistible this morning and defenses invincible at noon will probably be antiquated before the sunset of today or the dawn of tomorrow? But this we do know: we can never have "too much of a good thing." Our army and navy and air fleet must be rolled up larger and ever larger until, if "adequacy" require it, every ounce of toiling muscle, every fruit of human industry, and every gift of the harnessed forces of mother nature are rolled up in them.

Then "adequate" for *what* or *whom* shall our armaments be? Let me know this, at least, begs the tax-paying man in the street. Now there, replies the bellumist, I can furnish food for your sentiment, imagination, and fears, even though I may not satisfy your